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ABSTRACT

Designed to help people engage in constructive dialogue on whether the plight of the people of Bosnia calls for military intervention, the package provides the basis for three distinct and self-contained discussions that move conversation from general questions about what justifies the use of military force to specific questions about what to do in Bosnia. Session 1, "Are There Reasonable Grounds for War?" focuses on the ethical questions that arise when a nation considers military action. Brief text and four positions provide a starting point, and questions assist participant discussion. Section 2, "World Conflicts: Whose Responsibility?" present the post-Cold War debate over the role of the United Nations, the United States, and other nations in resolving world conflicts. Text and discussion questions aid participants in weighing various options. Session 3, "Bosnia: What Should Be Done? Who Should Do It?" lays out four options for intervention in Bosnia and provides the pros and cons to consider. This session includes a brief background piece on the history of the former Yugoslavia, leading up to the current conflict in Bosnia. Basic information on conducting a study circle follows the three sections. Descriptions outline a typical study circle, explain how to organize and lead a study circle, and provide suggestions for participants. A list of publications presents information on topical discussion programs and other resources from the Study Circles Resource Center. (CK)

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GOING TO WAR?
BOSNIA AND BEYOND:

A Study Circle Discussion Program

- **Are there reasonable grounds for war?**
- **World conflicts: Whose responsibility?**
- **Bosnia: What should be done? Who should do it?**

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A Study Circle Discussion Program

is a joint project of the
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Editor: Martha L. McCoy

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Thanks also to Lynn Pasquerella, Professor of Philosophy at University of Rhode Island, for her contributions to this program.

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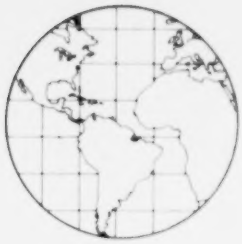


Foreword

For the second time in less than three years, we are faced with a debate over whether or not the US or other nations should commit their military forces - and the lives of some of their young people - to try to right the wrongs that are being committed in other parts of the world.

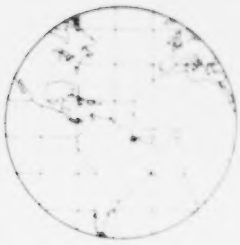
Experts can offer informed opinions about whether the use of military force will achieve a certain goal and at what costs, but they have no unique answers about whether a goal is worth those costs. This is a value judgment which, in a democracy, each of us has to make. But how to make sense of it all?

Going to War? Bosnia and Beyond is designed to help people who hold a variety of views - and uncertainties - to engage in constructive dialogue on whether the plight of the people of Bosnia calls for military intervention. It is intended for use in the small-group, democratic, highly participatory discussions known as "study circles." While participation in a study circle is no guarantee that people will be fully informed and confident in their personal views, they will certainly have better informed judgments and will better understand the views of those who disagree with them as well as those who agree.

You'll find in this package the basis for three different discussions which move conversation from general questions about what justifies the use of military force to specific questions about what to do in Bosnia. Also included are suggestions for study circle organizers, discussion leaders, and participants.

We encourage you to join together with friends and neighbors, co-workers and classmates, or members of your union, spiritual community, or other organization, to take part in thoughtful study circle dialogue. Whether or not your views change as a result of the discussions, you will be better prepared to share your views with your elected leaders. Please do contact them so that they will be able to take into account *your* thoughtful judgment.

If you need advice on conducting your study circle program, feel free to contact SCRC. Also, please let us know how your program goes, and what you think of the topical material and general study circle advice included in this booklet. Your feedback will help shape future SCRC publications.



Overview of the Three Sessions

Each of the discussion sessions in *Going to War? Bosnia and Beyond* is distinct and self-contained. The urgency of the situation in Bosnia may lead you to start with the third session, but we suggest that you use all three. This will help your group develop a strong basis for the discussion of Bosnia. Also, meeting over several sessions gives the group a sense of camaraderie even when the group members hold diverse views.

In addition to the three sessions, which you are welcome to photocopy and distribute for your study circle, this booklet contains basic information on conducting a study circle.

Session 1 - Are There Reasonable Grounds for War? focuses on the ethical questions that arise when a nation considers military action. Brief text and four positions provide a starting point for thinking through the most common arguments for and against the use of military force. Discussion questions assist participants in applying these theoretical arguments to the current debate over Bosnia.

Session 2 - World Conflicts: Whose Responsibility? focuses on the ongoing post-Cold War debate over the role of the United Nations, the United States, and other nations in resolving world conflicts. Especially for conflicts that seem uncontrollable and increasingly threatening, who should take the lead in deciding what should be done? A brief text and discussion questions aid participants in weighing various options about how to best prevent and prepare for future crises.

Session 3 - Bosnia: What Should Be Done? Who Should Do it? lays out the options that we (and the rest of the world) have in Bosnia, and provides the pros and cons that must be considered in making the tough decision of what to do. This session also provides a brief background piece on the history of the former Yugoslavia, leading up to the current conflict in Bosnia.

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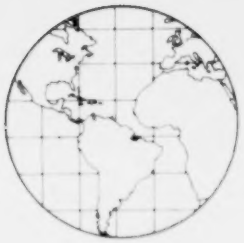

Session 1

Are There Reasonable Grounds for War?

Should outsiders intervene in Bosnia? Do the atrocities being committed there justify the brutality and suffering of escalated war*?

While few consider war a good thing, many would say that there are times when war is necessary. Still, as General Douglas MacArthur said, "War is hell!" Shortly after World War II, a scholar of world politics elaborated on these notions:

> War is a means for achieving an end, a weapon which can be used for good or for bad purposes. Some of these purposes for which war has been used have been accepted by humanity as worthwhile ends; indeed, war performs functions which are essential in any human society. It has been used to settle disputes, to uphold rights, to remedy wrongs; and these are surely functions which must be served. . . . One may say, without exaggeration, that no more stupid, brutal, wasteful or unfair method could ever have been imagined for such purposes, but this does not alter the situation." [Clyde Eagleton, *International Government*, rev. ed. (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1948), p. 393.]

Is war ever worth the price? Most religions, including the Judeo-Christian tradition, offer more than one answer on the morality of armed conflict. Some strains of thought in Christianity, Buddhism, and other spiritual traditions argue that fighting and killing are always wrong. On the other hand, many religions hold that war can be morally justified under certain conditions. One doctrine which states those conditions, the "just-war doctrine," (see page 10) is open to a wide range of interpretations when applied to actual situations. For example, there are different ideas about what constitutes unjust aggression, a requisite for "just cause" according to the doctrine.

In practice, political leaders offer a variety of justifications for going to war:

Defense of one's own territory. Fighting to counter an invasion of one's territory is accepted as reasonable grounds for war.

Defense of access to vital resources. The life of a nation depends on certain essential goods such as water, food, and energy resources (such as petroleum). Some people believe it is a "just cause" for war to ensure access to these goods, for example by fighting for the right to trade or to keep a river flowing through one's territory.

Defense of "values" or "way of life." Many people believe in the right to fight for freedom, or religious values, or human rights. What people value often varies from culture to culture.

Defense of others. Military intervention to come to the aid of a weak state that is the target of aggression is justified in international law under the principle of "collective security" when the intervention is authorized by the United Nations. It is less clear when the world can intervene by force to defend a group *within* a sovereign country.

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* Notes on terminology:

1) In keeping with everyday language, the terms "war" and "use of force" are used synonymously in this program; both are used to denote conflict between nations carried on by their armed forces. In other more precise usages, war is used to denote only a formal declaration of war.

2) The term "reasonable" is intentionally ambiguous. Determining what it means to you and your group is partially the purpose of this discussion. The term can encompass moral judgments, considerations of national interest, or both.

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The question of whether war is justified in Bosnia is clearly centered around the last two justifications. The issue is far from straightforward. For some, the horrors experienced by the Bosnians immediately translate into just cause for military intervention; for others, they do not.

This first discussion session challenges you to examine the question, "Are there reasonable grounds for war?" You will no doubt have Bosnia in mind as you consider this question, but we offer four positions as starting points for a more general discussion.

Briefly, the four positions offered as possible answers to the general question of "Are there reasonable grounds for war?" are:

Position 1 - The answer of absolute pacifism. There is never a good enough reason for going to war. Even though there are many just causes that we should work for, even at great personal and national sacrifice, there is a duty to remain nonviolent that overrides all other considerations.

Position 2 - The answer of conditional pacifism. There are some causes that are worth fighting for; the problem in this day and age is the weapons with which we do battle. The consequences of our methods for fighting far outweigh what might be gained for any cause, no matter how just.

Position 3 - The answer of idealism. There are causes worth fighting for, but we must seriously judge our motives before committing to any war. Also, as we fight we must take care not to use any methods whose consequences outweigh the good we are trying to accomplish.

Position 4 - The answer of pragmatism. War is sometimes necessary if we wish to preserve what is vital to our nation. Even though we don't usually give self-preservation the status of a moral principle, it is a necessary goal in a world dominated by power rather than by moral considerations.

Four possible positions in answer to "Are there reasonable grounds for war?"

There are different ideas about which ethical principles, if any, should guide our leaders as they make decisions about war and peace. The following broad positions represent a range of viewpoints that influence our judgments.

Position 1 – The answer of absolute pacifism. There is never a good enough reason for going to war. Even though there are many just causes that we should work for, even at great personal and national sacrifice, there is a duty to remain nonviolent that overrides all other considerations.

War can never be morally justified; by its very nature it is wrong. War is unjust because it involves the intentional taking of human life. Even though individuals are entitled to defend the basic rights they possess as human beings, there are moral limits to the extent people should go in order to defend their rights. Just as it is morally impermissible to torture another person, even under the threat of being tortured yourself, it is wrong to kill even under the threat of death. Killing is killing, whether done as an act of aggression or as an act of self-defense, whether by an individual acting alone or by a military force.

There are always alternatives to violence. Nonviolent resistance, which is not "passive" and requires great courage, is always morally preferable. Even if it does not immediately succeed in halting the aggression, in the long run it will succeed. War, by contrast, breeds violence and brings more war.

One cannot prepare for peace by planning for war. The belief that we might have to go to war to protect what we value, and the preparations we must make to ready ourselves for that possibility, have subtle but real effects on our society. The belief that violence is useful contributes to an acceptance of violence at all levels. Also, believing that we must remain ready to kill others keeps us from realizing the common humanity of everyone around the globe, regardless of nationality. All acts of killing other humans require a distancing and dehumanization of the person killed. Psychologically, in order to be able to kill someone, one must deny that the enemy is a fellow human being with the same foibles and fears, hopes and dreams. Modern war has an even greater potential for dehumanization than did war in the past, because in many ways it is "faceless." Because of modern weaponry, in most cases soldiers no longer have to come face to face with those they kill. Killing at a distance allows us to forget that we are indeed killing fellow human beings.

In brief, the duty to seek peaceful solutions and preserve human life overrides all other duties and transcends all other considerations.

Position 2 - The answer of conditional pacifism. There are some causes that are worth fighting for; the problem in this day and age is the weapons with which we do battle. The consequences of our methods for fighting far outweigh what might be gained for any cause, no matter how just.

This position comes from taking seriously two of the conditions specified by the just-war doctrine - the principle of "proportionality" and the principle of "discrimination." "Proportionality" means the overall aim in going to war must be sufficiently good to outweigh the anticipated evils of waging war. But modern weaponry is so destructive that its consequences will always outweigh any good that could come from war. This century has been labeled the "century of total war" because the creation of new military technologies makes it possible to lay waste vast areas of cities and towns at only a moment's notice, killing large numbers of soldiers and civilians. Even though a nation may intend to keep a conflict "limited," there is never a guarantee than it will not escalate into a wider conflict with great destruction.

"Discrimination" means that civilians should not be the targets of force. According to this principle, it is permissible to undertake an action when the deaths of noncombatants are foreseen as long as those deaths are not strictly intended. Modern methods of warfare do not allow us to distinguish civilians from soldiers, so we know that innocent people will be killed. Even though it is psychologically easier to drop bombs on people that we cannot see, it is not better morally to kill civilians with bombs than it is to kill them face to face with guns and bayonets. Even "smart bombs" are so destructive that large numbers of innocent civilians could be killed. We must morally condemn acts which we know will have such results.

One variation of conditional pacifism has been called "nuclear pacifism." According to this argument, the principles of proportionality and discrimination might not necessarily lead to the judgment that all modern warfare is immoral, but would classify all nuclear warfare (and threats of nuclear warfare) as immoral.

In summary, there is no cause worth the loss of life that could result from modern warfare.

Position 3 – The answer of idealism. There are causes worth fighting for, but we must seriously judge our motives before committing to any war. Also, as we fight we must take care not to use any methods whose consequences outweigh the good we are trying to accomplish.

Sometimes we must be willing to kill or to die for what we hold dear. But even in crisis situations we must carefully scrutinize our motives and actions according to moral standards. In deciding both whether to use armed force and what kinds of actions are legitimate as we fight a war, we must let moral judgments guide our actions. Otherwise, fighting in order to protect our highest values would hold no meaning: we risk destroying our values in order to protect them.

Which moral standards should we use? While there is no common ethical framework in our culture, our Judeo-Christian heritage does lead us to some common ideas of morality. One tradition, set forth in the just-war doctrine, includes the following standards:

1) Is the cause just? Is this war necessary for self-defense (or the defense of allies) against unjust aggression?

2) Have we exhausted all alternatives to war?

3) Do we have the right intention? Are we going to war in order to establish lasting peace?

4) Is the overall aim in going to war sufficiently good to outweigh the anticipated evils of waging war?

Since war is a form of organized violence performed on behalf of a country for certain national goals, it is more complicated to evaluate in moral terms than individual actions, but we must try our best to do so. Just because there is no enforceable international law doesn't mean there are no standards; after all, most of us refrain from killing because we believe it is wrong, not because there is a law against it.

While the world has no common code of conduct, there are some restrictions in warfare that are almost universally agreed upon (for example, there are treaties outlawing the use of poison gas or germ warfare). This demonstrates that nations are capable of limiting themselves in the name of moral principles.

Some would argue that the moral approach is also usually in our own best interest over the long run, even if in the short term it seems to require national sacrifice. If the principles outlined above had been applied to the question of whether to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for example, taking the moral approach would also have prevented or slowed the introduction of atomic weapons into world politics.

Position 4 - The answer of pragmatism. War is sometimes necessary if we wish to preserve what is vital to our nation. Even though we don't usually give self-preservation the status of a moral principle, it is a necessary goal in a world dominated by power rather than by moral considerations.

Since there is no final authority in international affairs, there are no binding moral obligations among nations. Nations may use high-sounding reasons to justify their actions, but in reality relations among nations are relations of power, unconstrained by moral rules. In such a world, weak or naive countries are frequently the victims of aggression; the only countries that survive are those that remain ready and willing to use force when survival calls for it.

Whenever the national interest is in conflict with morality, national interest should take precedence. Whether in the decision to resort to war or in decisions about how to use our forces once war has begun, we must think first and foremost about what is in our best interest; sacrificing any advantage due to overriding moral principles would only jeopardize what is important. This is especially true in the case of the United States, since we have played a leading role in protecting freedom around the world. At times, the ends justify the means.

This position does not necessarily hold that there is no place for morality in policy considerations or that "anything goes." But it does state that we should never uphold a moral ideal to the point that what is in our essential interest is endangered; we should uphold moral ideals when it is practical to do so.

Once war has begun, even though standards of morality can be factored into our decisions about what kinds of force to use, they should never cause us to do anything that would jeopardize our military objectives. Since we enter a conflict because we think that it is necessary and important to use armed force, we should use our military force in the most effective ways possible. At times these means may coincide with what we would consider the moral thing to do, but when by comparison a moral action would cause us to lose advantage or lose more of our own lives, we should instead do what is more effective. According to this position, then, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were acceptable as means to gain vital military objectives.

Some might criticize this position as a license to do anything in the name of national interest, but notions of practicality should prohibit any nation from acting aggressively. Besides, horrible aggressions have also been perpetrated in the name of morality, but that does not invalidate ethical principles. The world would be a much more peaceful place if each country looked out for its own best interests and made sure that it was not so weak as to tempt aggression.

In sum, in a world in which aggressive countries often act without regard for moral standards, the only option we have is to do what we must in order to survive.

Questions for Session 1

1. What is most appealing and least appealing about each position?

2. Every generation of Americans in the 20th century has experienced at least one war or conflict: World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, the Cold War. In addition, our nation has sometimes intervened in other countries (Grenada, Panama) or aided one side in a conflict. Which (if any) of these conflicts do you think were justified, and why? How did your experience with these conflicts affect your ideas about justifications for war? Does your thinking consistently fit with one of the positions laid out in this program?

3. If we think that other nations should intervene to protect the human rights of the people of Bosnia, should we intervene in all of the conflicts in which innocent people are being harmed? If not, how do we decide which of these conflicts to get involved in? How many atrocities are too many atrocities? Must there be mass starvation or mass slaughter?

4. How do we decide that it's time for military intervention? Should it be used only after we have tried other means? How much attention should we give to aiding the parties in their negotiations? For what reasons do we sanction military force - to stop the killing, to stand between warring parties, to enter the fight if we are attacked?

5. Should we get involved in internal disputes? For example, the United Sates intervened in Somalia, but we didn't intervene when Iraq dropped chemical weapons on its own citizens. Does this constitute a basic inconsistency? How important is the principle of national sovereignty? When, if ever, do humane imperatives outweigh rights of sovereignty?

6. Are there limits to what should be done militarily, even in the face of the most heinous atrocities? What are they?

7. How should morality figure into foreign policy?

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A summary of the basic criteria of the just-war doctrine

The doctrine of "just war" that was initiated by the early Christian church and developed by subsequent theologians continues to be discussed as a possible guide for making moral decisions about war; this doctrine played a prominent role in the national debate that took place prior to the Gulf War and has emerged once again in the debates about intervention in Bosnia. Though many people had not heard of just-war doctrine before these debates, their thinking had been influenced by many of its ideas.

Just-war theory focuses on two issues:

Just cause for war - When does a nation have a moral right to wage war?

Just conduct in war - What restrictions, if any, does morality place on the means used in fighting a war?

Just cause for war

In response to the first question, the just-war doctrine sets out the following six conditions for a nation to be morally justified in going to war. They are necessary conditions, meaning that all of them must be met in order for a war to be a just war.

Nations are justified in engaging in war if and only if:

1) There is *just cause*. This condition requires that a nation act either in its own defense or in the defense of its allies against unjust aggression.

2) There is *legitimate authority* to declare war. Those who declare war must have the authority to do so in order for the war to be considered a just one.

3) There is the *right intention*. The intention of those waging war must be the establishment and securing of long-lasting or permanent peace.

4) There must be a *reasonable probability of success*. In order to be justified in going to war, there must be a reasonable hope of achieving the good ends that are being sought.

5) There is *proportionality between the cause for going to war and the means used in waging war*. The overall aim in going to war must be sufficiently good to outweigh the anticipated evils of waging war.

6) Going to war is the *last resort*. All peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted before waging war can be considered just.

Just conduct in war

Even if all of the conditions for engaging in a war have been met, the war itself may be unjust due to the types of actions it involves. In order for conduct in war to be morally permissible, two conditions must be met:

1) *The principle of proportionality*. The force used must be proportional to the military objectives. Whereas the condition of proportionality under the first part of the doctrine requires that the overall purpose in going to war outweigh the anticipated evils, proportionality here refers to the use of particular force in relation to specific military objectives of winning the war or the battle (e.g., rape and torture of civilian women and children may demoralize the enemy and lead to a quicker end to the war, but would nevertheless not be justified).

2) *The principle of discrimination*. The use of force must be such that it allows for the distinction between combatants and noncombatants. It is permissible to undertake an action in which the deaths of noncombatants are foreseen as long as those deaths are not strictly intended.

3) Closely related to the requirement of discrimination is *the doctrine of double effect*. According to this doctrine, it is permissible to perform acts that have both good and bad consequences if:

a) The good consequences and not the bad are intended.

b) The bad consequences are not used as means to bring about the good end.

c) The good consequences are proportional to or greater than the bad consequences.

Annotated bibliography for Session 1

Bok, Sissela. *A Strategy for Peace: Human Values and the Threat of War.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.

Moral philosophy that addresses the question of war, especially in light of the existence of nuclear weapons.

Dyer, Gwynne. *War.* New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1985.

A fascinating history of warfare and its technologies.

Mandelbaum, Michael. *The Fate of Nations: The Search for National Security in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

A readable explanation of how several nations have tried to achieve national security and why they defined security in the ways they did.

Nolan, Richard T. and Kirkpatrick, Frank G. *Living Issues in Ethics.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company., 1982.

Includes a chapter entitled "War and the Quest for Peace," which discusses thermonuclear war, just-war theory, obstacles to peace, and efforts to achieve peace. Provides a list of suggested readings.

Payne, Samuel B. *The Conduct of War: An Introduction to Modern Warfare.* Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989.

Examines the political, military, and technical dimensions of modern war.

Regan, Richard J., S.J. *The Moral Dimensions of Politics.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

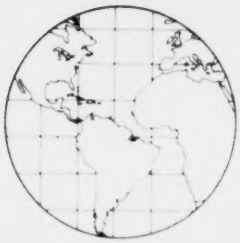
Chapters 6-8 examine the justice of conventional war, and of military intervention and support of revolutionary wars.

Sharp, Gene. *Gandhi as a Political Strategist.* Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publishers, Inc., 1979.

This book examines the ways in which Gandhi used the nonviolent method to promote change; chapter 10 examines "types of principled nonviolence." Chapter 12 explores the relationship between morality and war.

Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations.* New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1977.

A well-known modern consideration of just-war theory.



Session 2

World Conflicts: Whose Responsibility?

The war in Bosnia raises important questions that the world will face again and again. The question of what justifies the use of military force was examined in Session 1. This session examines the question of *who* should take the responsibility to intervene in world conflicts.

This is a pressing question in a world that is no longer dominated by the Cold War. Many are baffled about who should take the responsibility to deal with the many conflicts that are erupting around the globe. Especially in conflicts that seem uncontrollable and increasingly violent, who should take the lead in determining what to do? Whose responsibility is it to take action, including to go to war if that seems necessary?

This session fleshes out the three most common views in answer to the question of who should take the responsibility to intervene in conflicts around the world. Some say that the United States should take the lead, since it is the one remaining superpower. Others argue that this time of change in world politics presents an opportunity for the United Nations to take the lead, as was envisioned in the UN Charter. Still others argue that regional powers or organizations are the most logical answer, since it makes sense for nations to deal with conflicts in their particular part of the world.

The meaning of "intervention." "Intervention" includes military action, but it consists of much more than that. It includes the range of nonviolent actions that countries can take in their attempts to influence or resolve conflicts. Diplomatic efforts include attempts to negotiate or mediate a settlement between the disputing factions. The Camp David Accords, which brought peace between Egypt and Israel, provide an example of solving a conflict through diplomacy. Economic pressure, for example through the use of sanctions, is another form of intervention. (UN-imposed economic sanctions are currently in place against Iraq and Yugoslavia.) Publicizing a conflict in order to raise worldwide awareness is yet another form of intervention.

The growth of ethnic conflict. *The New York Times* quoted Senator Moynihan of New York: "The defining mode of conflict in the era ahead is ethnic conflict. It promises to be savage. Get ready for 50 new countries in the world in the next 50 years. Most of them will be born in bloodshed."

Each of the conflicts taking place around the globe is unique, with its own history, dynamics, and context. But many of these conflicts have been given new life by the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union often suppressed the nationalisms and ethnic rivalries within their spheres of influence.

Every corner of the world is experiencing some form of ethnic or religious conflict. Only some of these conflicts have been well documented by the Western media. Current international conflicts with important ethnic or religious elements include the fighting in Northern Ireland (Roman Catholic versus Protestant or Irish versus British), the Arab-Israeli conflict (Muslim versus Jew), the India-Pakistan conflict (Muslim versus Hindu), and the former Yugoslavia (Catholic versus Eastern Orthodox versus Muslim, or Croat versus Serb versus Muslim). Ancient tensions between former Soviet republics also have been escalating into armed conflicts.

Nations around the globe are facing calls for more autonomy or independence by ethnic and religious minorities *within* their territories. Ethnic conflicts within nations, re-examinations of national borders, and calls for autonomy or independence by ethnic and religious minorities create further complications for intervention. Does anyone – whether the UN, the US, or a regional power or regional organization – have

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the right to intervene in the internal affairs of a country that is mistreating its ethnic or religious minorities? When should nations that declare themselves independent be given diplomatic recognition?

Whose responsibility? With all of the conflict going on in the world, whose responsibility is it to take what US Secretary of State Christopher has called "preventive diplomacy"? Many nations in the world, especially the so-called "great powers" are taking stock; changes in world politics have given the question new meaning.

The US? During the Cold War, US decisions to intervene in other conflicts was often driven by its struggle with the Soviet Union. The decision to intervene was often overshadowed by the possibility that any military intervention could escalate into nuclear war. It was difficult to talk about an international community, since the UN was frequently divided among Cold War camps. Nations that did not align themselves with either power bloc complained that their concerns were ignored.

With the end of the Cold War, there is division within the United States about the extent of its global responsibilities. This is especially true in light of its involvement in the Gulf War, in Somalia, and in Bosnia.

The UN? The end of the Cold War unleashed some old conflicts, but it also allowed the UN to step up its efforts to deal with them. UN peacekeeping operations have proliferated. They have also taken more active roles, actually helping to disarm warring parties and to organize elections. UN peacekeeping operations in Cambodia and El Salvador are two prominent examples of the recent times that UN forces have gone beyond their old role as "observers" or "cease-fire monitors." In the summer of 1992, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali proposed a further upgrading of UN capability - a UN military force that could take rapid action to prevent or stop ethnic conflicts within countries.

In this time of great uncertainty about what should guide national and international decisions, the question of who should take the responsibility for dealing with world conflicts has a new importance. In the following pages we lay out three answers to the question of "Whose responsibility?" as a way for you to compare and contrast their implications for the United States and the rest of the world. Briefly:

View 1 - The United Nations should be strengthened so that it can take the primary responsibility to intervene in world conflicts.

View 2 - Regional organizations should be encouraged and strengthened to take the primary responsibility for intervening in conflicts in their regions.

View 3 - The United States should take the primary responsibility for intervening in world conflicts.

Three views for discussion

Each of the following views is presented in the voice of a possible supporter. The views are not necessarily mutually exclusive of each other; they are presented not to polarize your discussion but to help your group compare and contrast the major strands of thought that are surfacing in current debates about intervention in conflicts around the globe.

View 1 – The United Nations should be strengthened so that it can take the primary responsibility to intervene in world conflicts.

The opening words of the United Nations Charter dedicate it to saving succeeding generations from "the scourge of war, which . . . has brought untold sorrow to mankind." Supporters of this view argue that, in order to accomplish this mission, the United Nations must have a permanent international army that is empowered to intervene in conflicts around the world. That is the only way that it can act rapidly against aggression when that is necessary. The United Nations has proposed such a force, and it is time for the United States and other nations of the world to strongly support the plan.

There are several reasons for the UN taking primary responsibility that are especially pertinent at this moment of great change in world history. The world is no longer divided between two rival camps; the democracies and emerging democracies of the world are in basic agreement on principles that should be enforced. Even though the United Nations had its hands tied during the Cold War, it successfully intervened in many conflicts - through its diplomatic efforts and through its use of peacekeeping forces to act as buffers between warring parties. Now is the time to entrust it with the power to rapidly and actively intervene in world conflicts and counter aggression wherever it occurs. At a time of global recession, it makes sense to pool military resources of the industrial democracies. Also, a UN force would contain people from any and all member states of the UN, making all countries responsible for conflict intervention. The requirement of consensus will help to ensure that a conflict will be judged from a variety of views and that the decision on how to proceed will be a reasonable one.

What this view requires of the United States and other nations:

- A large investment of money and other resources to establish the infrastructure of such a force.
- Active participation in coming to an international consensus on how to deal with world conflicts.
- The willingness to risk the lives of citizens who are in the UN force for conflicts that may not be seen as vital to particular national interests.
- For nations contributing to the UN force, surrender of some of their national armed forces to UN commanders, who will at times be from a different country.

Some critics of this position would say:

- Since many current conflicts are internal ones, this kind of international force would too easily and often violate national sovereignty.
- This would entail the surrender of too much national autonomy to an international body.
- In reality, the United Nations will frequently intervene to protect the status quo, when it believes it is intervening to "keep the peace." (This criticism is often voiced by Third World countries.)

View 2 – Regional organizations should be encouraged and strengthened to take the primary responsibility for intervening in conflicts in their regions.

Regional involvement and leadership is essential to the real resolution of any conflict, since every country in the world is so heavily influenced by its neighbors and by its relationships with its neighbors. Supporters of this view argue that the nations in the region of a conflict, usually working through regional security organizations, are best placed to take the responsibility to intervene. The nations of the region are most apt to detect a conflict early in its development, to view it in its complexity, and to take effective action. Also, they are more capable of approaching the conflict with an understanding of the cultural and historical nuances.

This is probably the most difficult of the views to envision, since security arrangements would vary from region to region, but supporters of this view argue that its more decentralized approach is its strength. In fact, they say, one overarching "world policeman" will not be workable. In the case of the United Nations, the task of reaching consensus is too cumbersome and therefore only the most extreme crises are likely to be addressed. Neither will the United States as world policeman be workable, since it has its own interests that frequently do not coincide with what is best for the countries involved. Some of the recent absence of regional leadership in conflicts (for instance, the relative silence of European states in the Bosnian conflict) may seem to argue against this position, but that is only a reflection of the transition taking place in world politics. It can be accomplished – since the Cold War is over, we have the opportunity to bolster existing regional security arrangements and to build new ones. Regional international organizations such as NATO are seeking ways to revitalize their charter, and this is the kind of responsibility they should take.

What this view requires of the United States and other nations:

- The willingness to put monetary and diplomatic resources into encouraging regional security efforts.
- The willingness to let regional groups take the lead in conflict intervention, even when it may run counter to perceived particular national interests of larger world powers.
- Helping to make conflict prevention a priority, though it may be costly.

Some critics of this position would say:

- This will not work in regions of the world that are dominated by "bullies," or that have a history of regional antagonism rather than cooperation.
- Regional parties may be least capable of taking leadership in resolving conflicts because of their very closeness to the situation at hand. As with domestic disputes, there may be the need for a so-called "neutral party" to become involved.
- This approach is a recipe for frequent meddling in the internal affairs of other countries, and no one country or group of countries has the right to do that.
- This calls for too much costly and ongoing involvement in intervention around the world. At times the cost will outweigh what might be gained; also, there are many times when nations should be left to work out their own solutions.

View 3 – The United States should take the primary responsibility for intervening in world conflicts.

The United States is the only power in the world that can reliably and effectively step in when force is necessary. It should take this responsibility because it alone has the military and economic strength as well as strong democratic and humanitarian ideals to carry it out. Even in the one instance in history in which the United Nations took military action to confront aggression (the Korean War), in reality the United States was the one to take the lead. The Gulf War, often thought of as a UN action, was actually a US-led coalition that implemented UN resolutions. But this is as it should be – while the US should not be the world policeman, it is the world leader.

Taking this responsibility will be costly, and the US should try to enlist the assistance of others, whether through regional organizations or the United Nations. But since it is a global power, its interests will often be at stake, and it should take a leadership role whenever possible. When it comes to regional powers taking responsibility, the US should exercise caution since there are certain vital regions of the world in which US influence is still necessary. It should not become just "one voice among equals" in deciding how the UN will confront world conflicts. Even though it may seem that traditional power politics has ended, it has not. As new powers emerge, they may pull the United Nations in their own direction; the US should stay away from any arrangement that might take away its freedom of action.

What this view requires of the United States:

- Our close watch on the conflicts around the world, and our engagement in diplomacy in every region.
- A restructuring of our military forces to better implement peacekeeping efforts.
- Our willingness to risk the lives of the men and women in our armed forces for conflicts that sometimes seem removed from our vital interests.

Some critics of this position would say:

- This is a time when we need to redirect our resources away from foreign policy to domestic concerns. Taking primary responsibility for intervening in world conflicts would keep our resources focused on the outside world at a time when we can ill afford it.
- If we start playing this role now, other nations will come to expect it, and will not take their share of the responsibility. We saw this in the Cold War, when Europe allowed us to take a disproportionate share of the defense burden. We shouldn't let that happen in today's world, where the burden would be even greater.
- This option presumes that what is good for the US is good for the world, and vice versa. In reality, the United States (like any other nation) has intervened primarily on its own behalf. This will continue to be the case, and we should not expect that the US will differ from any other country in that respect.
- At this point in history we have the tendency to think of ourselves as having the responsibility to "take care" of the world; recent conflicts have been so horrible that we have naturally been drawn to that idea. Instead, our focus should be on emerging threats to our own security, such as the threat posed by Iran. Even though the Soviet Union has disintegrated, other powers around the world will emerge to threaten us.

Questions for Session 2

1. Many people would probably say that there is no one answer to the question of who should take responsibility for world conflicts. Based on the views described, do you think that there are useful general guidelines for who should take primary responsibility? Or, is the answer dependent on the situation?

2. Some people argue that no one should take primary responsibility for intervening in world conflicts. They say that a nation will only intervene in others' conflicts when they perceive the intervention to be in their self-interest, and that nothing will change that. Do you agree? Why or why not? If you agree, what does that mean for the future of conflict intervention?

3. Does the United States have a special responsibility to intervene in conflicts? Under what conditions? Why or why not?

4. If the United States does have a special responsibility, what does its responsibility include? Does it include taking the lead in persuading other countries to work out their conflicts? Does it include having its armed forces at the ready to intervene in situations that are not resolvable in any other way? How much would that responsibility involve the US in preventive diplomacy?

5. If the US thinks that a particular conflict must be resolved through force, should it intervene militarily even if the United Nations does not approve? When should the US seek approval from the United Nations, and when is it permissible to act unilaterally?

6. How does the question of who has the responsibility to intervene in conflicts affect the motives and goals of intervention? For example, do you think that a United Nations force would act very differently from the United States?

7. Each day, important problems and conflicts call for attention from citizens and policymakers around the globe. Why is it that certain of these conflicts receives great media attention, while others that seem just as compelling on humanitarian grounds do not receive much attention? What role does that play in decisions about whether to intervene?

Annotated bibliography for Session 2

On the kinds of conflicts emerging in the post-Cold War world:

"As Ethnic Wars Multiply, U.S. Strives for a Policy." *The New York Times*, 7 February 1993, p. A1.
Examines the question of what US and UN policy should be as ethnic wars multiply. Provides a useful summary of current conflicts.

"As Some Nations Build, the Past Devours Others." *The New York Times*, 12 July 1992, p. D1.
A discussion of the nature of post-Cold War divisions between and among countries and peoples.

On the question of whose responsibility:

Bloomfield, Lincoln P. "Policing World Disorder." *World Monitor*, February 1993, pp. 34-37.
Argues that ideas of peacekeeping are expanding, with new possibilities for collective rather than US unilateral responsibility. Lays out a useful spectrum of possible threats and responses.

Holt, Pat M. "America Needs a Clear Policy On Helping Nations in Distress," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 7 January 1993, p. 19.
Argues that it is not enough to say the US will act only in concert with the UN; the US first has to decide what it wants the UN to do.

"Intervention: The Lure - and Limits - of Force." *World Press Review*, March 1993, pp. 9-13.
Cover story. Reprints of several perspectives from around the world on the changing nature of world conflicts and who should be responsible for intervening. Focuses especially on peace-keeping and on the growing use of more active peacekeeping: "peace enforcement."

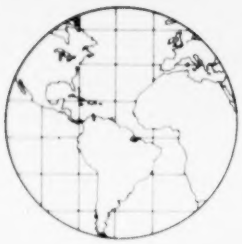
Klare, Michael T. "The New Challenges to Global Security." *Current History*, April 1993, pp. 155-161.
Argues that it remains to be seen whether international organizations are up to new challenges, or whether conflicts will be allowed to grow because of international inattention, inactivity, and indecision.

Smith, Gaddis. "What Role for America?" *Current History*, April 1993, pp. 150-154.
Suggests that while the US did not think it had hard choices to make in its foreign policy during the Cold War, it will face new and difficult choices in the coming years.

"The UN Empire: Polished Image, Tarnished Reality." Reprint of a four-part series by members of The Washington Post Foreign News Service. Available free from the Foreign News Desk of The Washington Post, 1150 15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20071.
Examines the growing number of tasks facing the UN (including conflicts around the world) and the variety of ways it is attempting to achieve them.

"The US Tests the Uncharted Waters of a World Order in Which It Is the Lone Remaining Super-power." *The Christian Science Monitor*, 7 April 1993, p. 3.
Discussion of the US role in the post-Cold War world. Presents a variety of views about whether the US should try to prolong its preeminence. Will a world without US primacy be a world with more violence and disorder?

"Who will fight for the world?" *The Economist*, 30 January 1993, pp. 15-16.
Argues for an important role for NATO in peacekeeping.



Session 3

Bosnia: What should be done? Who should do it?

For the past few months, a small country in southeastern Europe known as Bosnia has emerged as a leading story in the news. Television reports have brought home to Americans and others in the world a glimpse of the death, brutality, and misery taking place there.

The crisis began soon after Bosnia declared its independence in 1992, in a referendum boycotted by Bosnian Serbs. The vote unleashed a war for control of Bosnian territory among its three main constituent peoples - Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. Ethnic Serbian forces within Bosnia have been aided and supplied by neighboring Serbia (once also a part of the former Yugoslavia), which has had ambitions to create a "Greater Serbia." Some have said that the war is a civil war, some that it is a war of aggression, and some that it is both. Though all sides in the conflict have committed atrocities, the Bosnian Serb forces have been largely responsible for the horrible brutality against civilians. For many in Europe and the United States, the atrocities being committed in Bosnia are reminiscent of the Holocaust.

The US and other nations have been slow to respond to this crisis. International efforts - including economic sanctions, an arms embargo, and the stationing of peacekeeping troops - have not brought about an end to the killing or a resolution of the conflict. The plan negotiated by UN representative Cyrus Vance and European Community representative Lord David Owen has not been simultaneously accepted by all three parties to the conflict. If the peace plan were agreed to by all sides, the US would be faced with the decision of whether to send thousands of peacekeeping troops into a potentially explosive situation. As the violence continues, some people within the US and Europe are calling for more decisive action. Some have called for the US to take the lead in such decisive action.

Like the decision to go to war against Iraq or to send troops to Somalia, US policy toward the crisis in Bosnia ultimately involves all Americans. President Clinton has acknowledged that there are no easy answers to the question of what the United States should do. In developing a US response, the president and the Congress are looking to the views and opinions of the American people and of other nations.

The following options are designed to help you and your fellow study circle participants better understand the choices we face:

Option 1 - All necessary military action should be taken to stop the killing in Bosnia.

Option 2 - Military action is necessary, but there should be no commitment of troops to a ground war.

Option 3 - The UN and the European Community should take the lead in dealing with Bosnia, with the US as a supporting player.

Option 4 - US actions should be limited to continued assistance with humanitarian efforts and continued participation in UN-sponsored sanctions.

Four options for discussion

Each of the following views about what should be done in Bosnia is presented in the voice of a possible supporter. The views are not necessarily mutually exclusive of each other; we present them to help your group wrestle with the questions of what should be done in Bosnia and who should do it.

Option 1 – All necessary military action should be taken to stop the killing in Bosnia.

The United States should do whatever it takes to stop the fighting in Bosnia, even if it means becoming involved in a ground war. The atrocities taking place in Bosnia constitute a heinous crime against humanity on a par with the Holocaust; we have a moral responsibility to take action. There is no end in sight to the horrors. The Bosnian Serbs have continued their campaign of "ethnic cleansing" because they have had no fear of reprisal. UN-imposed sanctions have not worked, and UN- and EC-sponsored negotiations have failed to bring about an agreement. In addition, if the aggression remains unchecked, it could easily spread and threaten the stability of neighboring nations such as Greece and Turkey, where there are vital US interests.

Military actions could include surgical air strikes against Bosnian Serb artillery positions and ground troop deployment to separate the combatants and impose a cease-fire.

As the world's sole superpower and leader of the democratic world, the US should take the lead in convincing its allies and partners to go along in taking this action. Working in concert with its European allies, the United Nations, and Russia would produce a united front to stand against Bosnian Serb aggression.

Pros

- Would prevent the continuing murder and rape of innocent civilians.
- Acting decisively would deliver a crippling blow to the Serbian war machine.
- Destroying the military capability of the Serbian forces in Bosnia would eliminate one of the main obstacles to achieving a peace settlement.
- Military intervention now would prevent the conflict from spreading beyond its present boundaries.

Cons

- The US may find itself in a ground war that results in a large number of American casualties and that could kill as many people it is trying to save.
- Taking an aggressive stance toward the Bosnian Serbs would undermine progress toward peace in Bosnia, and force the UN to abandon its humanitarian relief operations in the area.
- The US may find itself in a war from which it cannot extricate itself and whose aims are unclear.

Option 2 – Military action is necessary, but there should be no commitment of troops to a ground war.

The United States should take the lead in convincing its allies and partners that stepping up the pressure is necessary to force a settlement of the Bosnian conflict. The continued killing of innocent civilians and continued military aggression are affronts to moral decency and to the standards of the international community. There is no end in sight to the horrors; UN-imposed sanctions have not worked, and UN- and EC-sponsored negotiations have failed to bring about an agreement. In addition, if the aggression remains unchecked, it could easily spread and threaten the stability of neighboring nations such as Greece and Turkey, where the US has vital interests.

Military actions would include surgical air strikes against Bosnian Serb artillery positions and lines of supply; additional military support could include lifting the UN-led arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims, to help "even out" the fight. But introducing troops into the region for the purpose of carrying out military actions would be a grave mistake. It would likely escalate into a struggle that would cause more misery over the long run than it would prevent.

As the world's sole superpower and leader of the democratic world, the US has a moral responsibility to take decisive action. The US should work in concert with its European allies, the United Nations, and Russia. This would produce a united front to stand against Bosnian Serb aggression. But if necessary, the United States must be prepared to act alone to bring the hostilities to an end.

Pros

- Limiting the military action to air strikes will minimize casualties and make it easier to exit the conflict.
- By striking at Serbian heavy artillery, military force would eliminate the chief military advantage of the Serbs and quickly force them to end their aggression.
- Evening up the balance of power between Serbian and Muslim forces in Bosnia would force the Serbs to come to the negotiating table.
- Limited military action would inform the world that we mean business, without involving us in a larger war.

Cons

- Air strikes alone will do little. Artillery is difficult to hit even in ideal conditions; Bosnian Serb positions are either well fortified or extremely mobile, making them difficult targets.
- Lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims is like pouring oil on a fire; it would only lead to an escalation of the fighting.
- Air strikes could provoke retaliation against the peacekeeping forces and relief operations already in Bosnia.
- Even taking the limited military option of air strikes will put our pilots in grave danger. The terrain is very mountainous, making identification of enemies difficult and US aircraft extremely vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire.
- The routes used for transport of military supplies are the same routes used for the transport of humanitarian aid. Therefore, air strikes would cut off aid to civilians who are suffering and dying. There could also be heavy "collateral damage," meaning that many innocent civilians could be killed in the air strikes.

Option 3 – The UN and the European Community should take the lead in dealing with Bosnia, with the US as a supporting player.

The United States should do what it reasonably can do to help stop the conflict and provide care to the victims of atrocities. What is happening in Bosnia is horrible, but it is not a situation that the US can or should attempt to solve alone or to take the lead on. The events in the former Yugoslavia are a result of European history, which Europeans understand better than anyone. For this reason, the Europeans are best situated to resolve this conflict. European leaders understand that this is primarily a political problem which is not amenable to a military solution. The US should play a supporting role to the continued work of the EC and the UN.

European leaders have discouraged military intervention, though they have encouraged American commitment to the multilateral peacekeeping force that includes British, French, and Spanish forces. Not only would military action endanger the peacekeeping troops, but it would escalate the situation.

The US should not try to act as the global policeman. A consensus among the US, the UN, Russia, and the EC must be reached before any new action will be effective. Negotiations leading to a peaceful conclusion of the conflict should continue, possibly with an American as one of the negotiators. Humanitarian relief efforts must continue. If all sides agree to turn to the military option, the effort must be a coordinated one.

Pros

- Building a strong international coalition to achieve a settlement in Bosnia would serve as a constructive precedent for future international crises, many of which will not be readily solvable by military action.
- This approach has the greatest chance of forming a lasting peace, since it would capitalize on the knowledge of those who have been actively working to bring about a conclusion to the conflict - the United Nations and the European Community.
- The US would be less likely to become embroiled in a Vietnam-type conflict.

Cons

- The failure of the US to take the lead in this crisis could severely reduce US prestige and influence around the world.
- There is no one "European" view of this issue, as demonstrated by Lady Margaret Thatcher's calls for the use of military force. It is not superior understanding of the conflict that has led to the reluctance on the part of European elected leaders to take more decisive action, but lack of real leadership.
- If the US does not take the lead, efforts to solve the crisis will be further drawn out, allowing the Bosnian Serbs and others in the conflict to continue their atrocities. As the remaining superpower and leader of the democratic world, the US has a moral responsibility to take the lead in urging decisive, immediate action.
- It is in the US interest to use its power and influence to take the lead. Otherwise, the stage could be set for an outbreak of fighting in Kosovo, Macedonia, and elsewhere in the Balkans.

Option 4 – US actions should be limited to continued assistance with humanitarian efforts and continued participation in UN-sponsored sanctions.

The suffering taking place in Bosnia is tragic, but that is not a sufficient reason for the US to make this crisis a high national priority. Even though the US should continue to participate in humanitarian efforts, it should not become entangled in UN or European efforts to resolve the conflict. The US has neither the capability to resolve the conflict nor a sufficient national interest in trying to do so.

In reality there is very little the US can do. The current conflict in Bosnia is the latest in a long and complicated history of animosities, making it almost impervious to solutions imposed from the outside. In addition, sorting out right from wrong is impossible: all sides have committed atrocities and all sides have been victims in this war. The United States has no business pressing the claims of one ethnic group against another.

Instead of contributing to the violence in Bosnia, the United States should help to relieve the misery there. It should limit its efforts to participation in humanitarian aid through appropriate international or non-governmental organizations.

Pros

- Staying out of the Bosnian conflict would allow US leaders to refocus their attention on pressing problems at home.
- Putting an end to the possibility of US military intervention in Bosnia would force each side in the Bosnian conflict to come to terms with the others.
- Focusing our energy on humanitarian relief in Bosnia would better address the needs of the suffering there.

Cons

- Since decisive action has the chance of making a difference, refusing to intervene militarily would be shirking our moral responsibilities.
- Though it may not be possible to bring about an immediate settlement of the conflict, it is possible to influence its direction over the long term. If the United States fails to take action, the conflict in Bosnia could spread to other areas in the Balkans and will threaten the vital interests of the US and of European powers.
- By refusing to play any role in resolving this crisis, the credibility of the US would be seriously injured.

Questions for Session 3

1. Of the options presented, which comes closest to your view of what should be done? What most influences you to hold your particular view? What most troubles you about the prospect of taking the action you most strongly prefer?

2. If US leadership were to fail to convince others of the necessity for military intervention, should the US go it alone? Why or why not?

3. People often say that United States policy should be guided by the "national interest." What does that term mean to you in the case of Bosnia?

4. Humanitarian reasons are often cited as the reason to intervene in Bosnia. Some reply that we can't intervene everywhere there is a human rights violation. How do you see this issue?

5. The atrocities - rape, murder, and other brutalities - committed in Bosnia have received widespread publicity. Should this influence US policy?

6. Some people worry that any engagement of ground troops in the former Yugoslavia could lead to another Vietnam. What kinds of information and ideas would best help you consider that possibility?

7. Some people think that the United States should have taken action in Bosnia much earlier. Do you agree? If so, what should have been done and why?

8. The United Nations and the European Community have taken the lead in trying to negotiate a settlement in this conflict. Do you think they have done the right thing? In your view, why have their efforts failed thus far?

9. If the US decides to be a supporting player, should it go along if the European Community decides that military force is necessary?

Historical background: The roots of conflict in the Balkans

History carries great importance in Bosnia*, as well as in the other areas that until recently made up the country of Yugoslavia. This is a land where great empires have come and gone, leaving behind a tangle of cultures, religions, and animosities. Borders have seldom been drawn by the peoples of the region. Rather, they have been imposed by powerful outsiders. Today, the map of what was once Yugoslavia is at the center of a complex, multi-faceted war. The following pages will introduce you to the forces that contributed to the disintegration of Yugoslavia and help you clarify your thoughts on what the US role in this part of the world should be.

Yugoslavia's creation

Yugoslavia was created at the end of World War I. The war led to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman Turkish, and Russian empires. As a result, the leaders of the United States, Britain, and France - the three main wartime allies - were largely responsible for redrawing the map of Eastern Europe. Some of the new countries they established, like Yugoslavia, brought together nationalities that had no history of sharing political power.

Among the Allied leaders, President Woodrow Wilson was most committed to reshaping the international order. Wilson declared that self-determination - the right of each nation to govern its own affairs - should be a guiding principle in framing the peace settlement. Even with the best of intentions, however, the Allies faced an enormously complex task with respect to the region known as the Balkans in southeastern Europe.

Over the centuries, history and culture had left a complicated patchwork of nationalities in the Balkans. In the 19th century, a wave of nationalism swept over the region. Nationalists strove to unite their people within a single state. They looked to Britain, France, Spain, and the other nation-states of Europe as models. Nationalists succeeded in breaking free from Ottoman Turkish rule to form the states of Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia before World War I. In Austria-Hungary as well, nationalism threatened to tear apart the empire. Indeed, the spark for World War I was ignited in 1914 when the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist in Sarajevo, the present-day capital of Bosnia.

Shaky foundations

The establishment of Yugoslavia, or land of the South Slavs, ran counter to the trend of nationalism. The state formed in 1918 had never before appeared on the political map. Rather than being based on the homeland of a single people, Yugoslavia brought together many different nations. Culturally, Yugoslavia had been a meeting ground for Greek, Turkish, Hungarian, Germanic, and Italian influences. Until 1929, the country was known as "The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes."

The Serbs, who had established an independent kingdom before World War I, were Yugoslavia's largest nationality. They were Eastern Orthodox Christians who looked toward Russia as their natural ally. Croats, the second largest group, were Roman Catholics. The Croats, along with the Slovenes, considered themselves closely tied to the civilization of central Europe. In addition, more than 11 percent of Yugoslavia's population was Muslim, consisting mostly of Bosnians and Albanians. Although the Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims shared the same language and racial background, they had never been united politically before 1918.

Yugoslavia was formed without much thought as to how political power would be shared among the country's nationalities. Yugoslavia's Serbian leaders believed that they were justified in dominating the new

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* Bosnia consists of two regions, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

state. Not only had the Serbs gained experience in self-government before the war, but their army had fought fiercely against Austro-Hungarian forces during World War I. In proportion to its small population, Serbia's losses during the war were greater than any other country involved in the fighting. The Croats and Slovenes, however, resented Serbian control.

Yugoslavia's political foundations were shaky from the start. At the core of the country's instability was the friction between Yugoslavia's two largest ethnic groups, the Serbs and the Croats. Even after Yugoslavia's creation, Croatian nationalists held out hope that Britain, France, and the United States would support Croatian independence. In 1920-21, Croatian leaders refused to participate in the assembly that drew up Yugoslavia's first constitution. They charged that top politicians in the old Serbian government were manipulating the process. Indeed, the constitution that was produced in 1921 concentrated power in Belgrade, the capital of both the new Yugoslavia and the old Serbia.

The failure of democracy

Parliamentary democracy in Yugoslavia during the 1920s failed to heal the country's divisions. From Belgrade, Serbian leaders ruled Yugoslavia with a heavy hand. The Yugoslav army was led almost exclusively by Serbian officers, while Serbs comprised the great majority of the top officials in the government. Little progress was made toward forging a "Yugoslav" identity.

In 1925-27, a coalition government led by Serbian and Croatian parties ended amid squabbling between political leaders on both sides. The rancor culminated in 1928 when the head of the leading Croatian political party was assassinated in the parliament by a Serbian deputy. Yugoslavia's king responded in 1929 by suspending the constitution, dissolving the parliament, and establishing a royal dictatorship. Although King Alexander was a member of Serbia's royal family, he encouraged his subjects to think of themselves as Yugoslavs. The king set forth a uniform set of laws for the entire country. New administrative units were created, erasing "Croatia" and "Serbia" from the map.

By the early 1930s, however, the king faced widespread opposition, fed in part by the worldwide economic depression. Among the Croats, the extreme nationalist *Ustasha* movement gained strength. The group was dedicated to achieving Croatian independence through insurrection and terror. In 1934, the *Ustasha* was responsible for the assassination of King Alexander during a royal visit to France. Also implicated in the assassination was Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, who was eager to gain control of Yugoslavia's Adriatic coastline. Alexander's assassination was followed by a brief period of Serbian-Croatian cooperation.

Elections in 1938 prompted a renewed sense of uncertainty in Yugoslavia. The results made it clear that the Croats had not accepted Yugoslavia's political structure. In an attempt to hold the country together, the new government opened negotiations with Croatian leaders. In August 1939, a few days before the outbreak of World War II, a formal compromise was reached. A large Croatian province was created, containing roughly 30 percent of Yugoslavia's territory and population. Croats were given substantial autonomy to govern their affairs. The compromise, however, met immediate opposition. Serbs, Slovenes, and Bosnian Muslims demanded that they too be granted autonomy. Meanwhile, Serbs in Croatia feared that their rights would be violated. Finally, the *Ustasha* extremists opposed any move toward compromise and worked to subvert the government. When World War II reached Yugoslavia, no group, not even the Serbs, was strongly committed to defending the country.

World War II

In the months before Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, Hitler used Eastern Europe as a staging ground. Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria were pressed to ally themselves with Germany. In early 1941, Hitler insisted that Yugoslavia likewise join the alliance and demanded that German troops be permitted to march through the country to reach Greece. With no hope of British support, Yugoslavia's Prince Paul reluctantly signed the Tripartite Pact. Within days, however, Serbian nationalists led a bloodless coup to overthrow him. The coup brought together the elements for a broad coalition government. But the new regime proved short-lived. Hitler flatly rejected compromise, and on April 6, 1941, the Nazis invaded without issuing a declaration of war. In less than two weeks, the Yugoslav army was forced to surrender.

Hitler viewed Yugoslavia as a vehicle for Serbian ambitions and quickly moved to dismember the country. Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Albania all annexed parts of Yugoslavia. At the same time, the Nazis created a separate Croatian state.

Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia opened a period of particular brutality. More than 1 million people died in Yugoslavia during the war. Roughly half of them were Serbs, many of whom were killed at the hands of the *Ustasha* in Croatia. In addition, two major guerrilla movements emerged to resist the Nazis - the Serbian-dominated *chetniks* and a communist organization that included all nationalities.

The communists and the *chetniks* battled for control of Yugoslavia even as they struggled against the Nazis. By 1943, the communist partisans had distinguished themselves as the most effective guerrilla group and had established a provisional government. After the Germans withdrew from Yugoslavia in 1944, fighting between the two groups intensified. The communists, led by Marshal Tito, ultimately emerged as the strongest force in the country.

Tito's Yugoslavia

The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was proclaimed by Tito in January 1946. Tito, who was half Croat and half Slovene, moved decisively to eliminate his opponents. The leader of the *chetniks* was executed and the Catholic archbishop of Croatia imprisoned. Tito struck out at his enemies, real and potential, with little regard for nationality. His first priority was to consolidate his own power, and he killed thousands of Yugoslavs in the process. In foreign policy, Tito sought to break free of Soviet domination. Unlike in other countries of Eastern Europe, the communist party in Yugoslavia had sunk deep roots before the end of World War II. Tito did not need Moscow to maintain power. On the contrary, Tito openly defied Soviet control, even after Soviet dictator Josef Stalin threatened to invade Yugoslavia in 1948.

Tito's Yugoslavia was no more politically stable than the Yugoslavia that had existed before World War II. Under Tito, the country was divided into eight administrative units. A complex federal system distributed political power among Yugoslavia's ethnic groups. The Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and later the Bosnian Muslims were recognized as "nations." Each group dominated their respective republic within the Yugoslav federation. In addition, there were other ethnic groups - most notably the Albanians and the Hungarians - who were classified as "nationalities." The areas where they lived were not given full republican status. Most of Yugoslavia's Albanians, for example, lived within the Serbian province of Kosovo.

At the center of the political balancing act was Tito himself. Tito feared that the Serbs would come to dominate communist Yugoslavia, much as they had dominated the country's government before World War II. He was also wary of Croatian nationalism. To offset the influence of the Serbs and Croats, Tito promoted the rights of Yugoslavia's smaller ethnic groups. A new constitution adopted in 1974 reflected Tito's efforts to contain the forces of nationalism and hold Yugoslavia together. The 1974 constitution shifted more power to Yugoslavia's republics. In addition, the Albanian and Hungarian minorities within the Serbian republic were permitted greater autonomy.

Yugoslavia's disintegration

After Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia entered a period of economic and political crisis. The debts that Yugoslavia had accumulated in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to a drop in living standards. Without Tito's leadership, the country's power-sharing system gradually unraveled. Ethnic minorities in Yugoslavia's republics were increasingly subjected to discrimination as local leaders tightened control over their home regions.

In 1981, Albanians in Kosovo province staged a rally to demand additional autonomy. The demonstration, however, turned into riots with an anti-Serbian tone. Suddenly, Yugoslavia's long-simmering ethnic tensions were out in the open, and yet the country Tito had created was not equipped to cope with the deepening divisions. There was no free press, independent judicial system, or other institution where problems could be addressed. Instead, the voices of strident nationalism were increasingly heard, especially from the media of Serbia and Croatia.

In 1987, a hard-line Serbian nationalist, Slobodan Milosevic, won control of the communist party organization in Serbia. At a time when Yugoslavia's economic crisis was worsening, Milosevic promised to promote Serbian rights. He played on the importance of Kosovo in Serbian history, recalling that the region was the site of a decisive battle between Christian Serbs and Muslim Turkish invaders in 1389. Although the Serbs were defeated, Milosevic emphasized that Kosovo represented a sacred symbol of Serbian valor. More significantly, he decried the fact that Albanians made up 90 percent of Kosovo's population by the 1980s.

In 1988, Milosevic helped organize the Committee for the Protection of Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins,

which sponsored nearly 100 protest rallies. With the demonstrations as leverage, Milosevic moved to extend his power. He revoked Kosovo's autonomy, and then sent in the Yugoslav army to crush Albanian protests. The same measures were applied to the Serbian province of Vojvodina. In Montenegro, Milosevic put his supporters in charge of the local government. Meanwhile, leaders in Slovenia and Croatia felt threatened by Milosevic's ambitions. In 1989, the Slovenian Assembly declared that Slovenia had the right to secede from Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia's disintegration accelerated in 1990. By the end of the year, local elections had produced non-communist governments in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, while in Macedonia the communists formed a minority in a coalition government. Only in Serbia and Montenegro were hard-line communists still firmly in control. The divisions separating Yugoslavia's main ethnic groups were growing increasingly sharp. On one side, the Serbian government was seeking to centralize power in Belgrade. On the other side, Croatian and Slovenian leaders were pushing for a loose confederation. In the middle were officials in Bosnia and Macedonia, who favored a compromise arrangement.

The outbreak of war

In early 1991, Slovenian and Croatian leaders announced that they would secede from Yugoslavia if a new political arrangement for the country was not reached by June 26, 1991. As the deadline approached, incidents of violence increased. On June 26, Milosevic ordered the Yugoslav army to attack Slovenia. The Slovenes, however, held off the mostly Serbian forces and secured their independence.

War flared up next in Croatia. The conflict there was much more fierce than in Slovenia. In Croatia, the fears of local Serbs were driven by memories of the massacres their people had suffered under Croatian rule during World War II. Fighting first broke out between Serbs and Croats in areas that had witnessed some of the worst *Ustasha* atrocities. As the war heated up, the Yugoslav army lent its support to local Serbian militias. By the end of 1991, Croatia had lost more than 30 percent of its territory. Croatia's Serbs proclaimed the establishment of the "Krajina" republic and asked to become part of Serbia. In response, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman vowed that Croatia would fight to recapture the territory it had lost.

Although the war in Bosnia did not begin until 1992, few doubted the region's potential explosiveness. Bosnia had been Yugoslavia's most ethnically mixed republic - a "little Yugoslavia" where Bosnian Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian communities lived side by side in mountain villages. In Bosnia's capital of Sarajevo, the site of the 1984 Winter Olympics, the three groups shared one of Europe's most ethnically diverse cities.

In February 1992, Bosnian Muslim leaders organized a referendum. The results indicated that a majority of the republic's voters wanted to break away from Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serbs, who constituted roughly one-third of the population, boycotted the referendum. As the republic's largest ethnic group, Bosnian Muslims occupied the leading positions in Bosnia's new government. They also became the primary victims in a three-sided war that began soon after the country's declaration of independence.

As the war in Yugoslavia widened, Milosevic was forced to give up his original goal of preserving the country. Instead, he focused on expanding areas of Serbian domination in Croatia, Bosnia, and elsewhere. In Bosnia, he armed local Serbs and encouraged them to fight against their Muslim and Croatian neighbors. At the same time, he opened talks with Croatian President Tudjman to carve up Bosnia between them. As a result, the territory controlled by Muslim forces steadily shrank. In some areas, Muslims and Croats cooperated to hold off the Serbs. In other areas, they fought one another.

More than 100,000 people have died in the struggle for Bosnia. Most of the deaths have been innocent civilians. Another 1.5 million people have become refugees. As in Croatia, the fighting in Bosnia has extended far beyond military objectives. Rather, the war has been fought for control of the land. The old Yugoslavia, where people of different ethnic backgrounds lived together, has been torn apart by the conflict.

Although all sides have been guilty of atrocities, Serbian forces have been responsible for most of the brutality against civilians. In Bosnia especially, they have sought to eliminate Muslims and Croats from areas under their control. The process of "ethnic cleansing" has featured gang rape, concentration camps, and massacre.

The international response

The international response to the crisis in Yugoslavia has been slow. Initially, the US and Western European leaders sought to hold Yugoslavia together, fearing that a breakup of the country would trigger conflict. Later, they came to suspect Milosevic's intentions, and recognized the independence of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia.

The United Nations (UN) imposed economic sanctions on Yugoslavia in May 1992 to increase the pressure on the Milosevic government. Three months later, the United States, Britain, and France supported a resolution in the UN Security Council that authorized the use of "all necessary means," including force, to ensure that food and medicine reach the suffering in Bosnia. UN forces, however, have been unable to halt the violence and the misery. Serbian forces have frequently blocked UN shipments of relief supplies.

Beginning in August 1992, UN representative Cyrus Vance and European Community representative Lord David Owen worked to negotiate a settlement to the war. The plan they proposed in January 1993 would divide Bosnia into ten self-governing provinces. Bosnian Serb leaders, who today control 70 percent of Bosnia's territory, initially rejected the plan. In May 1993, however, their leader signed the agreement after President Clinton threatened to bomb Serbian positions in Bosnia. The plan hit another obstacle a few days later when the Bosnian Serb parliament insisted that a referendum on the agreement be held among Serbs in Bosnia. Clinton responded by saying that the United States would not tolerate attempts to delay implementation of a peace settlement. Meanwhile, fighting in much of Bosnia continued.

Annotated bibliography for Session 3

On the history of the Balkans:

Kaplan, Robert D. "A Reader's Guide to the Balkans." *The New York Times Book Review*, 18 April 1993, pp. 1 and 30-33.

Describes a variety of literature on the history of the Balkans and the former Yugoslavia, from poetry to academic texts.

On the current conflict and efforts to address it:

Curtius, Mary. "Planning Progresses on Bosnia Force." *The Boston Globe*, 14 March 1993, p. 26.

Describes the logistics and politics of a multilateral peacekeeping force that would be required to secure any peace settlement in Bosnia.

"The Future of the Balkans: An Interview with David Owen." *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1993, pp. 1-9.

Lord Owen's remarks on the peace plan he was instrumental in negotiating, on US and European views, and on hopes for a settlement.

Holler, Elizabeth. "Grief Upon the Earth." *Sojourners*, April 1993, pp. 20-25.

Faces of war in the former Yugoslavia. A moving account of the human tragedy in the Balkans, written by a *Sojourners* staff member who traveled to Croatia in December of 1992.

United States Institute of Peace. "Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Yugoslavia: A Conference Report." Washington, DC: July 13-15, 1992. 39 pp.

A readable summary of the history of the former Yugoslavia, the current crisis, and of attempts at conflict resolution. Also uses this crisis as a way to learn about intervention in other conflicts.

On what should be done in Bosnia and who should do it:

"Bomb the Serbs? A Dialogue." *The New York Times*, 29 April 1993, p. A23.

Two op-ed pieces. One by Misha Glenny argues that any military intervention would only widen the war, not solve it. One by David Rieff argues for sending troops.

Gelb, Leslie. "False Humanitarianism." *The New York Times*, 6 August 1992, p. A23.

A criticism of a Western policy limited to humanitarian relief. Argues that such a policy serves only to whet the appetites of the Bosnian Serbs.

Guest, Iain. "Hard Lessons From the War in the Balkans." *The Christian Science Monitor*, 6 April 1993, p. 18.

Proposes lessons for future international action to contain and prevent ethnic crises before they erupt into war.

Hamilton, Lee H. "Air Strikes? Not Yet." *The New York Times*, 24 April 1993, p. 23.

Suggests tightening sanctions on Serbians in accordance with the new UN mandate, terminating diplomatic and economic ties, and military action - in that order.

Kassebaum, Nancy Landon. ". . . So Proceed with Care in Bosnia." *The Washington Post*, 26 April 1993, p. A19.

Argues for realism about what we in the US are willing to do with regard to Bosnia.

Mead, Walter Russell. "Put American Troops in Macedonia." *The New York Times*, 22 February 1993, p. A17.
Favors sending a tough message without provoking war.

Ryan, Randolph. "Why not a safe haven for Bosnia?" *The Boston Globe*, 1 May 1993, p. 15.
An open letter to Vice President Al Gore. Argues that any peacemaking or peacekeeping force will require a beefed up UN-NATO force equipped for combat.

Thatcher, Margaret. "Stop the Excuses. Help Bosnia Now." *The New York Times*, 6 August 1992, p. A23.
An early call for the West to play a military role in Bosnia.

Wiesel, Elie. "Shadows in the Camps." *The New York Times*, 25 February 1993, p. A19.
Describes his commission of inquiry into prison camps. Pleads for high-level, immediate attention to address the atrocities.

"What Should the West Do About Bosnia?" *The Boston Globe*, 26 April 1993, p. 13.
Three op-ed pieces. One by Bogdan Denitch dubs the Vance-Owen plan "stillborn;" advocates air strikes, lifting the arms embargo, and UN-enforced safety zones. One by Aleksa Djilas argues for a minimal role for the US and for the partition of Bosnia into three units as a realistic solution. One by Jane M. O. Sharp argues for a multilateral military and civilian intervention.

On religious perspectives:

United States Catholic Conference. A statement by the USCC Administrative Board calling on religious believers and the international community to act with new resolve to stop the war in the Balkans. Issued March 26, 1993. For a full text of the statement, contact: Office for Media Relations, United States Catholic Conference, 3211 4th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017-1194, (202) 541-3200.
Supports the limited use of military force to protect the innocent, but says such force "must be strictly *limited* in its means and objectives; it should *not prolong or widen the war*; and it should *not undermine prospects for a just political solution* to the conflict."

American Jewish Congress. "Shall We Pray that They All Die, Mr. President? An Open Letter to Bill Clinton." *The New York Times*, 20 April 1993, p. B2. For more information, contact: American Jewish Congress, 15 East 84th Street, New York, NY 10028, (212) 879-4500.
Calls for learning lessons from the "massive failure of the moral imagination in the Western world that made the Holocaust possible;" for ending the arms embargo; and for military intervention to protect cities under siege and to safeguard food convoys.

"No Easy Answers: Responses from people of faith on the hard questions of international intervention." *Sojourners*, April 1993, pp. 14-19 and 26.
Eight brief articles by Christian leaders that examine the moral conflicts inherent in calls for humanitarian intervention in Bosnia and elsewhere.

Nelson-Pallmeyer, Jack. "Wise As Serpents, Gentle as Doves?" *Sojourners*, April 1993, pp. 10-13.
Offers 10 observations in light of the serious challenges to Christian pacifism and nonviolent conflict resolution that are arising from many conflicts, including Bosnia.

A Typical Study Circle

In a study circle, 5-20 people meet several times to discuss the various choices our society or their organization might make concerning a social or political issue. Complex issues are broken down into manageable subdivisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth.

Each discussion lasts approximately two hours and is directed by a well-prepared study circle leader whose role is to aid in lively but focused discussion. Participants generally receive material to read in advance of each session.

Two individuals, the organizer and the leader, are central to the creation of a study circle. The study circle organizer selects the reading material that forms the basis for discussion, recruits participants, arranges the logistics of the meetings, and chooses the discussion leader. The study circle leader stimulates and moderates the discussion, helping the group identify areas of agreement and examine areas of disagreement.

Below is an outline for a single study circle session. When several sessions are put together into a program in which each discussion builds upon the previous ones, the result is a very fulfilling, enriching educational experience.

1. Introductions - Start by giving group members the opportunity to briefly introduce themselves. Even if you've met several times already, at least go around the room to give names.

2. Ground rules - Remind everyone of the ground rules for study circles. Be more elaborate in your first meeting, but even in subsequent meetings the leader can provide a brief reminder by saying, "My role is to keep discussion focused and moving along. Your role is to share your concerns and beliefs and to listen carefully to others. You should be willing to examine your own beliefs in light of what others say."

3. Small groups - Unless your study circle is already very small, you can start the discussion of the topic at hand by dividing the participants into small groups of three to five people. Give each group the task of preparing a brief presentation of the best possible case for one of the positions, views, or options presented in the material. This may call for a considerable degree of role playing, but it helps ensure that a variety of ideas will be considered in the discussion. When time is called, the small groups reassemble to make their presentations. Questions should be limited to requests for clarification.

4. Discussion and deliberation - This part of the study circle, devoted to wide-open discussion, should occupy the bulk of the time. Encourage participants to explore their true beliefs as opposed to those that were assigned in the small groups. If one of the views is ignored by the group, the leader should make sure that it receives a fair hearing.

5. Summary and common ground - Even if there is little agreement, encourage participants to review their discussion and try to identify common ground. They may, for example, have common goals even though their ideas for proper means for reaching those goals vary widely.

6. Next steps - Give participants the opportunity to discuss how they could become further involved in the issue. Be sure they at least consider writing to their elected representatives, and perhaps to the local newspaper.

7. Evaluation - Some type of evaluation should take place at the end of each session, even if it's as simple as going around the room giving people the opportunity to say what they liked and didn't like about the discussion. The staff of SCRC would greatly appreciate your taking the time to write a brief evaluation of your program, especially noting how SCRC resources helped and how they could be improved.

Organizing a Study Circle

The study circle organizer is the creator of a study circle. This person plans a general scheme for the meetings and selects written material. The organizer also recruits participants, arranges the logistics of the meetings, and chooses the discussion leader. Throughout the process of creating a study circle, the organizer sets the tone for the enterprise and must convey its purpose and goals to the leader and to the participants.

Whether you are organizing a large-scale program or a single local study circle, you will need to make basic decisions about the focus of your program.

• **Who will be the participants in your study circle?** The answer to this question may be obvious if you have a sponsor for your program such as a civic organization; your church, synagogue, or mosque; or your employer. Friends and neighbors are likely choices if you have no sponsoring organization. In either case, ask potential participants to make a commitment to attend each session, not only for the sake of continuity, but also to create a high level of familiarity and comfort within the group. You may need to press participants to get a firm "Yes, I'm coming." Figure on some dropouts from among those who say "Probably."

• **How much flexibility can you allow for participants to determine the direction of the program?** In an ideal study circle, participants greatly influence the program and can help answer many of the remaining logistical questions. This can most easily happen when the participants naturally gather together, for instance at church or at work, and can come together briefly to discuss what they'd like to see happen in their study circle. This ideal is hard to achieve, though, when the participants are not familiar with each other or with the study circle process. If your study circle meets for several sessions, however, participants will be more willing and able to influence the direction of the program as it progresses.

• **What will you distribute for reading materials?** You are welcome to photocopy pages from this booklet and distribute as needed provided you credit the Study Circles Resource Center as their source. Will you use all three sessions found in *Going to War? Bosnia and Beyond*? Will you distribute all of the material, or pare it down to just the introductory page or two for each session? Will you supplement with some of the additional readings in this booklet or with some of the items found in the bibliographies? Do you want to distribute some recent clippings that provide up-to-the-minute updates on the situation? These decisions, of course, should be made in conjunction with the discussion leader. Unless your choice of reading material is very brief, you'll need to make arrangements for sending it to participants before your first meeting.

• **How many times will your group(s) meet? When and where?** Do you need to condense the program, or do you think the participants you plan to recruit will be willing to meet several times? When planning when and where to meet, bear in mind that time and place will largely determine, or be determined by, the potential participants. Weekly meetings of about 2 hours' duration each are ideal, but be creative. How about breakfast or lunchtime discussions, or before or after church services or other meetings?

• **Who will lead the group(s)?** This may be the most important decision you make. A bad leader can ruin a study circle and a good one can make it a wonderful experience. You'll want to find someone whom you have seen in action, or who comes highly recommended.

Remember, above all, that there is no one model for organizing a study circle: shape the program in your community to meet the needs of the sponsoring organization and the participants.

Leading a Study Circle

The study circle leader is the most important person in determining the program's success or failure. It is the leader's responsibility to moderate the discussion by asking questions, identifying key points, and managing the group process. While doing all this, the leader must be friendly, understanding, and supportive.

The leader does not need to be an expert. However, thorough familiarity with the reading material and previous reflection about the directions in which the discussion might go will make the leader more effective and more comfortable in this important role.

The most difficult aspects of leading discussion groups include keeping discussion focused, handling aggressive participants, and keeping one's own ego at bay. A background of leading small-group discussions or meetings is helpful. The following suggestions and principles of group leadership will be useful even for experienced leaders.

• **"Beginning is half," says an old Chinese proverb.** Set a friendly and relaxed atmosphere from the start. A quick review of the suggestions for participants will help ensure that everyone understands the ground rules for the discussion.

• **Be an active listener.** You will need to truly hear and understand what people say if you are to guide the discussion effectively. Listening carefully will set a good example for participants and will alert you to potential conflicts.

• **Stay neutral and be cautious about expressing your own values.** As the leader, you have considerable power with the group. That power should be used only for the purpose of furthering the discussion and not for establishing the correctness of a particular viewpoint.

• **Utilize open-ended questions.** Questions such as, "What other possibilities have we not yet considered?" will encourage discussion rather than elicit short, specific answers and are especially helpful for drawing out quiet members of the group.

• **Draw out quiet participants.** Do not allow anyone to sit quietly or to be forgotten by the group. Create an opportunity for each participant to contribute. The more you know about each person in the group, the easier this will be.

• **Don't be afraid of pauses and silences.** People need time to think and reflect. Sometimes silence will help someone build up the courage to make a valuable point. Leaders who tend to be impatient may find it helpful to count silently to 10 after asking a question.

• **Do not allow the group to make you the expert or "answer person."** You should not play the role of final arbiter. Let the participants decide what they believe. Allow group members to correct each other when a mistake is made.

• **Don't always be the one to respond to comments and questions.** Encourage interaction among the group. Participants should be conversing with each other, not just with the leader. Questions or comments that are directed at the leader can often be deflected to another member of the group.

• **Don't allow the group to get hung up on unprovable "facts" or assertions.** Disagreements about basic facts are common for controversial issues. If there is debate over a fact or figure, ask the group if that fact is relevant to the discussion. In some cases, it is best to leave the disagreement unresolved and move on.

• **Do not allow the aggressive, talkative person or faction to dominate.** Doing so is a sure recipe for failure. One of the most difficult aspects of leading a discussion is restraining domineering participants. Don't let people call out and gain control of the floor.

If you allow this to happen the aggressive will dominate, you may lose control, and the more polite people will become angry and frustrated.

• **Use conflict productively and don't allow participants to personalize their disagreements.** Do not avoid conflict, but try to keep discussion focused on the point at hand. Since everyone's opinion is important in a study circle, participants should feel safe saying what they really think – even if it's unpopular.

• **Synthesize or summarize the discussion occasionally.** It is helpful to consolidate related ideas to provide a solid base for the discussion to build upon.

• **Ask hard questions.** Don't allow the discussion to simply confirm old assumptions. Avoid following any "line," and encourage participants to re-examine their assumptions. Call attention to points of view that have not been mentioned or seriously considered, whether you agree with them or not.

• **Don't worry about attaining consensus.** It's good for the study circle to have a sense of where participants stand, but it's not necessary to achieve consensus. In some cases a group will be split; there's no need to hammer out agreement.

• **Close the session with a brief question that each participant may respond to in turn.** This will help them review their progress in the meeting and give a sense of closure.

Suggestions for Participants

The goal of a study circle is not to learn a lot of facts, or to attain group consensus, but rather to deepen each person's understanding of the issue. This can occur in a focused discussion when people exchange views freely and consider a variety of viewpoints. The process - democratic discussion among equals - is as important as the content.

The following points are intended to help you make the most of your study circle experience and to suggest ways in which you can help the group.

• **Listen carefully to others.** Make sure you are giving everyone the chance to speak.

• **Maintain an open mind.** You don't score points by rigidly sticking to your early statements. Feel free to explore ideas that you have rejected or failed to consider in the past.

• **Strive to understand the position of those who disagree with you.** Your own knowledge is not complete until you understand other participants' points of view and why they feel the way they do. It is important to respect people who disagree with you; they have reasons for their beliefs. You should be able to make a good case for positions you disagree with. This level of comprehension and empathy will make you a much better advocate for whatever position you come to.

• **Help keep the discussion on track.** Make sure your remarks are relevant; if necessary, explain how your points are related to the discussion. Try to make your points while they are pertinent.

• **Speak your mind freely, but don't monopolize the discussion.** If you tend to talk a lot in groups, leave room for quieter people. Be aware that some people may want to speak but are intimidated by more assertive people.

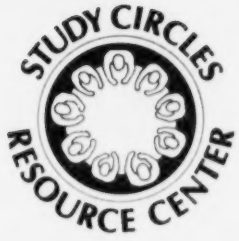
• **Address your remarks to the group rather than the leader.** Feel free to address your remarks to a particular participant, especially one who has not been heard from or who you think may have special insight. Don't hesitate to question other participants to learn more about their ideas.

• **Communicate your needs to the leader.** The leader is responsible for guiding the discussion, summarizing key ideas, and soliciting clarification of unclear points, but he/she may need advice on when this is necessary. Chances are you are not alone when you don't understand what someone has said.

• **Value your own experience and opinions.** Everyone in the group, including you, has unique knowledge and experience; this variety makes the discussion an interesting learning experience for all. Don't feel pressured to speak, but realize that failing to speak means robbing the group of your wisdom.

• **Engage in friendly disagreement.** Differences can invigorate the group, especially when it is relatively homogeneous on the surface. Don't hesitate to challenge ideas you disagree with. Don't be afraid to play devil's advocate, but don't go overboard. If the discussion becomes heated, ask yourself and others whether reason or emotion is running the show.

• **Remember that humor and a pleasant manner can go far in helping you make your points.** A belligerent attitude may prevent acceptance of your assertions. Be aware of how your body language can close you off from the group.



Topical Discussion Programs and Other Resources from the Study Circles Resource Center

Publications of the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) include topical discussion programs; training material for study circle organizers and discussion leaders; a quarterly newsletter; a clearinghouse list of study circle material developed by a variety of organizations; and an annotated bibliography on study circles, collaborative learning, and participatory democracy. Prices for topical programs are noted below. (You are welcome to order single copies and then photocopy as many as necessary for your group.) Other resources from SCRC are free of charge.

Topical discussion programs (prices are noted below)

___ ***Going to War? Bosnia and Beyond: A Study Circle Discussion Program*** (a three-session program examining the ethics of war, who has responsibility to intervene in world conflicts, and what should be done in Bosnia; 1993, 40 pages) - $4.00

___ ***Can't We All Just Get Along? A Manual for Discussion Programs on Racism and Race Relations*** (a five-session discussion program including recommendations for tailoring the discussions to a particular community or organization's concerns; 1992, 42 pages) - $3.00

The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guides (brief discussion guides suitable for informal or structured discussion) - $1.00 each, $0.75 each for 10 or more copies of any single title

___ *The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Racism and Race Relations* (1992, 12 pages)

___ *The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Sexual Harassment* (1992, 16 pages)

___ *The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Civil Rights for Gays and Lesbians* (1993, 16 pages)

___ **Human Relations package** (the three booklets listed above plus the 8-page *Organizing and Leading a Busy Citizen's Study Circle*) - $3.50 per package, $2.50 per package for 10 or more copies

Public Talk Series programs (in-depth discussion programs each providing background information, a range of views, and suggestions for discussion organizers, leaders, and participants) - $2.00 each

___ 203 - *Revitalizing America's Economy for the 21st Century* (1992, 25 pages)

___ 401 - *The Health Care Crisis in America* (1992, 37 pages)

___ 501 - *Homelessness in America: What Should We Do?* (1991, 35 pages)

___ 302 - *The Right to Die* (1991, 44 pages)

___ 301 - *The Death Penalty in the United States* (1991, 44 pages)

___ 304 - *Welfare Reform: What Should We Do for Our Nation's Poor?* (1992, 19 pages)

___ 202 - *American Society and Economic Policy: What Should Our Goals Be?* (1991, 19 pages)

___ 104 - *The Role of the United States in a Changing World* (based on material developed by the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project of the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University; 1991, 34 pages,)

(over)

Other resources from the Study Circles Resource Center (available at no charge)

Pamphlets

___ "An Introduction to Study Circles" (20 pages)
___ "Guidelines for Organizing and Leading a Study Circle" (32 pages)

Resource Briefs (single pages)

___ "What is a Study Circle?"
___ "Leading a Study Circle"
___ "Organizing a Study Circle"
___ "The Role of the Participant"
___ "Assistance with Study Circle Material Development"
___ "Developing Study Circle Course Material"
___ "What is the Study Circles Resource Center?"
___ "The Study Circles Resource Center Clearinghouse"

Connections (single-page descriptions of on-going study circle efforts)

___ Adult Religious Education
___ Youth Programs
___ Study Circle Researchers
___ Unions

Focus on Study Circles (quarterly newsletter)

___ Sample copy
___ Subscription

Other Resources

___ Clearinghouse list of study circle material
___ *Annotated Bibliography on Study Circles, Collaborative Learning, and Participatory Democracy*

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Send this form, along with payment if you ordered topical discussion programs, to:

Study Circles Resource Center
PO Box 203
Pomfret, CT 06258
(203) 928-2616, (203) 928-3713 (FAX)

Large quantities of brochures and this form are available for distribution.

5/93

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